

DEFINITION OF CHARACTER

In fiction, _____ refers to a textual representation of a _____ (or occasionally another creature). Most fiction writers agree that character _____ is the key element in a story's _____, and in most pieces of fiction a close _____ with the characters is crucial to understanding the story. After all, a story is really only interesting to us as _____ because of what it tells us about people and how it makes us _____ about them.

The story's **protagonist** is the _____ in generating its _____, and this individual can embody the story's theme. Characters can be either **round** or **flat**, depending on their _____ and the extent to which they _____.

Creating Characters:

Authors achieve **characterization** with a _____ of techniques: by showing the _____ of the character and of those _____ her, by revealing the _____ or dialogue of the _____, or by showing the thoughts and _____ of others in _____ to the character. These techniques are called **indirect characterization**. When a character is developed by the author _____ describing the character, we call it **direct characterization**.

IMPORTANT LITERARY ELEMENTS RELATED TO CHARACTER:

- **Characterization:** The _____ by which an author presents and _____ a fictional _____
- **Protagonist:** A story's _____ character. The protagonist is the character we _____ our attention on, the person who sets the _____ in _____. The protagonist is often BUT NOT ALWAYS the _____ in the story.
- **Antagonist:** The character or _____ in conflict with the protagonist. Most protagonists are rounded, dynamic characters who _____ in some important way by the _____ of the story, novel, or play. The antagonist is often BUT NOT ALWAYS the villain in the story.
- **Round character:** A complex, fully developed character, often prone to _____
- **Flat character:** A one-dimensional character, typically not _____ to the story

Determining Methods of Characterization

Thank You, M'am
By: Langston Hughes

Methods of Characterization	Examples from the story and what they reveal about the characters
<i>Indirect Characterization</i>	
The character is revealed through his or her own speech	
The writer describes how the character looks and dresses	
The character's private thoughts are revealed	
The writer reveals what other characters in the story say or think about the character	
The writer shows what the character does- how he or she acts	
<i>Direct Characterization</i>	
The writer directly states what kind of person the character is: sneaky, honest, evil, and so on.	

CHARACTER EXERCISE HOMEWORK

When a character is created in fiction, the various details provided by the author combine to create a believable representation of a person. Flat characters are typically developed in rough outline only, with such basic attributes as gender, age, and occupation or family role indicated but not much else. On the other hand, round characters are developed more fully. For instance, we may learn about their clothing preferences, skills, hopes or fears, favorite work of art or song, and relationships. Through narrative background, dialogue, transcriptions of characters' thoughts, and characters' actions, the author hopes to convey, in a round character, a believable "living" person.

INSTRUCTIONS

Select one character trait from each of the following columns to create a basic character outline.

Age:	Gender:	Occupation:	Personality Traits:
15 years old	Male	Pilot	gentle, respectful, nurturing
20 years old	Female	Tattoo Artist	thoughtful, quiet
25 years old		Construction Worker	attentive, intelligent, detached
30 years old		Loner, estranged from family	caustic, mean, scornful of others
50 years old		Body Painter	self-absorbed, mean
75 years old		Snowboarder	
		Dragon Slayer	
		President of a Large Corporation	
		Wizard	

Please answer the following questions about your character on the back of this paper. **It will be collected tomorrow for a homework grade!!!**

Name of Character:

1. Based on the character you've created, imagine and describe a potential conflict or story situation in which this character might be found. Explain how this character might resolve the conflict. In other words, what kind of PLOT might a story with this character have?
2. Make your character more round by adding four or five additional details that seem to fit with this character. Select details that will coalesce (unite) with the conflict/situation expressed in the preceding question. Consider such aspects as personal habits, fears, desires, significant experiences, worst and best memories, relationships, strengths, weaknesses, and finances. Be sure that they connect with your story and enhance your character.
3. Go back to the selection columns and change one basic aspect. Would the new character still fit in the same situation suggested for the second question? Would he or she still fit the details expressed in this question? Explain why or why not, based on character traits.